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Ballet Today

Ballerina and American Princess—by Pigeon Crowle

AMONG the distinguished visitors to Europe this summer will be Maria Tallchief, a classical dancer with a dazzling technique. She is America's first ballerina, but she can trace her dancing lineage through her teachers, George Balanchine and Bronislava Nijinska, to the Russian Imperial School. She is also Princess Wa-Xthe-Thonba, daughter of the Chief of the Osage Tribe of American Indians.

FIRST STEPS

Her father, Alexander Tallchief, is a pure-blooded American Indian; her grandfather, Chief Big Heart, was at one time the only member of the tribe to speak English; her mother is of Scottish-Irish descent. The tribe owned rich oil-bearing interests and Maria, in the words of her father was "the first Osage to go out and earn a living." She learnt to dance almost as soon as she learnt to walk, and could play simple tunes on the piano at the age of three.

ENGAGEMENT

When she was eight the family moved from the Indian Reservation at Fairfax, Oklahoma, where she was born, to California. Here she studied with Ernest Belcher and later Nijinska, sister of the famous Nijinsky, and was soon much in demand for charity functions and school entertainments as a dancer and a pianist. She left the Beverley Hills High School in 1942, when she was seventeen, and received her first professional engagement in the corps de ballet of a film with a dance sequence called *Presenting Lily Mars*. This was her first experience of the life of a professional dancer, and from then on her great ambition was to become part of a ballet company and to make it her career.

Maria Tallchief, photographed by Rubin De Rays

SOLOIST

On a visit to New York, she tackled Serge Denham, director of the Ballets Russe de Monte Carlo, and reminded him he had seen her in Hollywood and praised her dancing. As a result she became a member of his corps de ballet and made her debut in Canada as a Can Can Dancer in *Gaite Parisienne* in which Danilova and Franklin were the principal dancers. She soon became a promising soloist and when Balanchine, two years later, joined as choreographer, he was greatly impressed with the talent and potentialities of the young dancer. He sent her to the American School of Ballet, which he had founded with the help of Lincoln Kirstein. Here she had to start learning all over again, for Balanchine is a most austere and severe exponent of the classical style, and under his tuition and guidance, in the hard Russian manner, a dazzling dancer began to emerge.

MARRIAGE

In the following year they were married, and Maria became ballerina of Balanchine's newly formed company, the New York City Ballet. He created and revived many ballets for her, exploit her technical virtuousity, and though their marriage was disolved later, their balletic partnership remained.

In her first season, her parents paid a rare visit to New York. It was a proud moment, for Marjorie Tallchief, Maria's sister, had also become a celebrated dancer and was appearing in New York, with the Marquis de Cuevas' company.

On the first visit of this company to England, Maria Tallchief hurst her foot on the opening night and was unable to dance for a week, so London only had a glimpse of her incredibly fluid technique, which seems to have no limits. Even so, she was seen to be a dancer of exceptional virtuousity with an

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BALLET TODAY for March

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Lycette Darsonval as Salome (sketch by Jean Target).

REYNA FROM PARIS

THE National Theatre Opera in Paris has revived *The Tragedy of Salome*, a symphonic poem, with songs, by the French composer Florent Schmitt. This was successfully staged in 1907 by Loie Fuller, the dancer; followed by Jacques Rouche who was Director of the Arts Theatre and the Opera in 1912, and then by Serge Diaghilev in 1913. The work was again taken up in 1930, from a choreography by Nicholas Guerra and was danced by the star of that time—Suzanne Lorcia.

This time, the choreography has been brushed-up by Albert Aveline. The costumes and decor by Yves Brayer, and this time too Mademoiselle Lycette Darsonval has taken the role of Salome.

The ballet lasts approximately twenty minutes, and Albert Aveline has well designed his choreography both for the "star" and company. The present role of Salome is an entirely classic one and has little in common with the "hysterical Salome" of Oscar Wilde. The entire poem is based on this role and Lycette Darsonval indeed astonished her admirers and non-admirers by her astounding elasticity and full understanding of a somewhat difficult role. This cannot technically be termed as a ballet, but as a "danced symphonic poem"—for some time one can be assured that the Opera will keep this "billed" owing to its great success.

The following ballets are to be arranged at the Opera, but certain changes may probably take place. First of all, *Les Noces Fantastqiues* to music by Marcel Delannoy, book by Serge Lifar (who will also write the choreography).

The decor of this ballet was done by the artist Daragnes just before he died, and the costumes were designed by Levasseur

This ballet lasts an hour, and is in two acts showing how a faithful sailor resists the "temptations" on an enchanted island and finally finds his fiancé and is re-united in the great "beyond".

In the Spring we shall see Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliette*.

After this, Roland Petit intends returning to the Cote d'Azur with his collaborators, singers and musicians, in order to prepare a great spectacular show for the 1955 season in Paris. A point to remember about this, there will be only a little dancing in the show.

—From Previous Column

Borodin's Igor in Full— but Negligible Ballet

THE anticipation of seeing—for the first time—Borodin's Prince Igor was, for once, fully upheld by the premiere at the Stoll Theatre on January 24.

This magnificent, if rather unpopular, opera was presented by the Yugoslav National Opera from Zagreb, brought to London by Peter Daubeny. One hardly required the assistance of the programme to know that both orchestra and conductor were also from Zagreb.

The production value would have been enhanced by more recently painted scenery but the singing of Vladimir Ruzdjak (Igor), Maria Podvinec (Jaroslavna), Noni Zunec (the son), Tomislav Neralic (brother) and Drago Bernardic (Khan) amply out-focussed such complaints.

The choral work was outstanding, male and female, and the orchestra first class.

The Polovetzien Dances in the second act were hideously costumed (girls dressed as boys in pale tan slax) and although the house response to the dancers exceeded (unbelievably) the reaction to the singers, this made nonsense of the audience, not of the company.

The soloists danced well, with some excitement, but a London which has had Rabovsky in the role would need the Tartars themselves to effect competition.

My only sorrow was that the house was all but empty of dancers and dancegoers—surely it would have been a sign of artistic integrity to evince an interest in the Borodin-in-full from which an exerpt has become of the most popular of all ballet standbys ?

P. C.-R.

THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE

THE new Covent Garden Opera Ballet had their most exacting task to date in the first performance of Michael Tippett's opera *The Midsummer Marriage* on January 27th, conducted by John Pritchard. Although the music of the four ritual dances had already been heard, the ballet with excellent inventive choreography by John Cranko was, of course, receiving its first performance. The undoubted success of the dances owed much to Miss Barbara Hepworth's brilliant scenery and costumes, chiefly in simple colours accentuated by linear contrasts.

The first three dances occur in the clearing of a wood, before the temple of the Ancients on midsummer afternoon. They comprise *The Earth in Autumn* (hound chasing hare), *The Water in Winter* (otter chasing fish), and *The Air in Spring* (hawk chasing bird); the last two are, in my opinion, among Cranko's finest inventions. Pirmin Trecu, who with Julia Farron was on loan from the Sadler's Wells Ballet, was suitably cast as the virile leading dancer, Strephon, though he had one unfortunate lapse when he failed to synchronise his cymbals with those in the orchestra.

LITERAL

The final dance, Fire in Summer, occurs towards the end of the opera: while the subject was, of course, dictated by the text, it has been rather too literally translated into dance. One might be excused for thinking that *Prince Igor*—now in London—holds its own on account of the Polovtsian Dances, and the ritual dances certainly give the new opera a better chance of survival.

The second one, so beautifully realised with the fish (Pirmin Trecu) wearing blue celluloid fins, rising in the pond among attendant mermaid figures, is very attractive.

What of the opera as a whole ?

By arranging it on two plains with obvious references—musical and theatrical—to Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Tippett has aimed high. But we must remember that Mozart's contemporaries, enjoying Schikaneder's pantomime as we do Tippett's ballet, probably understood Mozart's Masonic allegory better than we understand the oriental symbolism and Jungian psychology inherent in *The Midsummer Marriage*. There are, too, numerous sociological references to be considered: the work is too crowded, yet undoubtedly it contains much of value.

CRANKO

On the opening night, it was well sung, except by Oralia Dominguez, as T. S. Eliot's clairvoyant Sosostris, since her diction was such that scarcely a word of her important—and beautiful—aria could be understood.

Richard Lewis, who first sang Troilus, was admirably suited as Mark, and Joan Sutherland sang well as Jenifer. Otakar Kraus, as an industrialist 'King' Fisher—a seemingly unnecessary jingle—was impressive.

But Barbara Hepworth's decor and John Cranko's choreography were so distinguished as to detract occasionally from the music: on subsequent hearings this would not be so. Perhaps it is as well that the five performances end just before *The Magic Flute* returns to Sadler's Wells.

Gerard Bourke

BERYL GREY in "IMPERIAL"

THE difficulty of achieving the right balance between the two leading ballerinas in *Ballet Imperial* was shown again when Beryl Grey appeared in the main role for the first time on January 26th. Although she danced with great splendour, beautiful musical phrasing and—apart from one bad slip at the beginning—complete technical command, the part does not really suit her.

It is poorly designed, in that the choreography contains some ugly movements which seem to be imposed upon the music for the sake of originality rather than to grow out of it; while the dances are cramped, angular and staccato. Only Moira Shearer, with her speed and brittle style, ever made the role convincing. It does not suit the ample movements and the long, sculptural lines of Beryl Grey's dancing.

The passages for the second ballerina, however, are more fluid, poetic and direct. Svetlana Beriosova danced them with her usual soft elegance and an enchanting gaiety; but Beryl Grey has always been unequalled in this role, to which I hope she will now return.

All the same the ballet is not wearing well. Perhaps it is Eugene Berman's costumes and setting—that lugubrious eagle, the dingy brown *tutus* and hideous wigs; perhaps it is Balanchine's choreography, which is often repetitive and uninspired. *Ballet Imperial* is not one of his major works, and I think it is now due for a rest. Despite the nobility of Beryl Grey's performance I do not believe it would be greatly missed from the repertoire.

R. A.

Annette Page as Swanhilde

ONE of the more promising features of the last two seasons of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, has been the rapid progress made by Annette Page.

It was just a year ago, when she deputised at very short notice for Patricia Miller in *Les Sylphides*, that her dancing really begun to gain in stature and strength, and in the last twelve months the improvements in her technique have been legion.

For her debut as Swanhilde, a matinee performance had been chosen; a matinee packed with schoolchildren so much so that there did not appear to be a vacant seat in the house. A famous West End actor and film star, who has recently been appearing with the Old Vic, was asked on Television recently to describe the performance he dreaded most; he stated the matinee, which is attended by thousands of L.C.C. schoolchildren, for they are an impossible audience to gauge, for they always seem to laugh or cry when one least expected it: however Annette Page need to have had no worries on that account, for the children who came to applaud *Coppelia* could not have had a more pleasant and agreeable treat before becoming schoolbound again; they were an immensely appreciative and an unusually intelligent audience.

NERVOUS

Apart from a slightly nervous beginning, Annette Page's portrayal was full of attack and joie de vivre, besides showing a good sense of comedy. At the moment though, her arm movements are not nearly concise enough, several of these movements lacking a necessary finish; when she has acquired this, her performance will be greatly improved, and should be a worthy asset to the company.

It must have been most reassuring to have had such a reliable partner as Gilbert Vernon, for he has performed the role of Franz innumerable times to perfection, both at Covent Garden and at Sadlers Wells, where he has now become part of the backbone of the present company.

Unfortunately in the first act Swanhilde's friends were not infused by Annette Page's youthful exuberance, resulting in a most limpid pas de six, being most untidily danced; few of the dancers succeeded in either keeping time with each other or with the music; a few hours in the rehearsal room would not be a miss here.

How very pleasant it was to see again the costumes that Loudoun Sainthill designed for the men; the greens and yellows with their tyrolean flavour; essentially peasant-like in manner, gay, and echoing of harvest-tide.

V.C.

—and FIFIELD

FIRST of all let me say that I have the greatest admiration for Elaine Fifield as a dancer; she is a young miniature Australian with a charming personality; she was the perfect ballerina for the Theatre Ballet, where she created many important roles, culminating in her success as the Bride in Blood Wedding.

She has now moved from the more intimate Islington to the not-so-homely Holborn, where as

Cont. page 9

DANSES CONCERTANTES

Kenneth Macmillan's Danses Concertantes is reviewed on this page—the photograph shows Maryon Lane and David Poole in the ballet.

KENNETH MACMILLAN was an ambitious young man, for he had chosen to devise an abstract work to the complex score of Strawinski, to which a successful, though short-lived ballet had already been conceived by no less a person than George Balanchine; it was also to be only his third choreographic venture of a sizeable nature; yet his ambition has borne fruit, for he has produced a most excithg work in a most original style; it is a work which will be a worthy addition to the Sadler's Wells theatre Ballet's repertoire.

The choreography is abounding in ideas, many of which are not nearly developed enough though, for periodically the ballet shoots off at a tangent, leaving us with the fragments of several unexploited themes. This surfeit of ideas, is at any rate more commendable than an abscence of them, a fault which has been apparent in several new ballets recently. Many of the movements are staccato in their construction, in consequence having to be perfectly executed to maintain the pattern of the work. The opening of the ballet was a piece of well contrived theatre, with the curtain rising siliently on a darkened stage; the dancers coming immediately to life with the advent of the light and the music.

MARYON LANE

Dances Concertantes is performed with a cast of fourteen; nine girls and five boys, admirably led by Maryon Lane, to whom it now seems that choreographers are making amends for having neglected creating roles for her in the past, let us hope that now Kenneth Macmillan will be to her, what Frederick Ashton is to Margot Fonteyn.

Her dancing maintained a high standard throughout, she imparted to her role both wit, elegance and humour; her dancing with David Poole providing one of the principal attractions of the ballet; but the choreographer has not cleverly enough contrived her dance with the mask, it becomes lost in the effect it strives to create. The pas de trois danced by Annette Page, Sara Neil and Gilbert Vernon was intricate in its construction and exciting in its conception.

Donald Britton performed his difficult solo in exemplary fashion, his elevation being particularly outstanding.

HEALTHY

The decor of Nicholas Georgiadis, a young Greek designer, was a most impressive feature of the ballet; the set, with blue as the predominant colour was reminiscent of the work of Clave; the general effect was of a Parisian New Orleans setting, designed in a surrealistic fashion.

The men all wore skin-tight costumes, some blue. some yellow and some orange; they were effective rather than attractive; the men all wore rather an unfortunate head-dress, which gave the impression that they were all wearing miniature umbrellas. The costumes of the girls were in the same colours, but were of a Greek classical tunic style; they were both effective and decorative.

Strawinski's score is one of his lesser known works, being seldom performed as a concert piece; however it is ideal as a ballet score providing some very dansable music.

The outlook for British ballet is indeed healthy, if in the future Kenneth Macmillan maintains and betters the high standard he has set himself in his first really major work.

V.C.

Violetta Elvin in Giselle

AFTER a long absence from the title-role in *Giselle*, Violetta Elvin celebrated her return on February 3 by giving one of her finest performances. Although the part suits her less well than either Odette/Odile or Aurora—Elvin is not a lyrical ballerina nor an actress of a very wide range—her dancing in the second act has gained enormously in authority since she first appeared in the role at Covent Garden.

Elvin has not yet got the measure of the very difficult opening scenes; the nervous gaiety and swift changes of mood require to be most subtly balanced if the character of Giselle is to be established. At present Elvin's *Giselle* is here a little too robust, too sophisticated in the early love scenes, to suggest the impending tragedy. She does not bring out Giselle's strange emotional instability, which is essential to the understanding of the later scenes. Her acting rather lacked spontaneity, and it was not until the "Mad Scene" was reached that her performance became moving and dramatically convincing. This was presented with great intensity and pathos, yet never breaking away from the conventions of the Romantic Ballet.

In the second act Elvin danced superbly, with a wonderful flow of movement, lightness and nobility. Her performance has an intense tragic grandeur which recalls Toumanova, although without her mannerisms. The beautiful scene where Giselle is drawn away from the protection of the Cross by Myrtha was magnificently performed; here Elvin made the conflict between her love for Albrecht and her impotence before Myrtha obvious to all. Many dancers are content to ignore the dramatic conflicts of the second act, but Violetta Elvin here has few equals, while her dancing has an elegiac beauty which is extremely moving.

Her partner, Alexis Rassine, danced with his usual neatness and competence; but it is a pity that a dancer in the grand manner like Elvin is not given a partner whose style is on a larger scale.

The other outstanding feature of the evening was the performance of Cynthia Mayan in the first act *pas-de-deux*. She has admirable stage presence for so young a dancer, and should have a great future. Mary Drage made a commanding Myrtha, and Franklin White must be congratulated on his brave attempt to present a likeable Hilarion—surely the most unkindly treated of all ballet villains.

R. A.

. . . and in LAC

IT was not until January 28th that Violetta Elvin made her first appearance of the current season in the dual role of Odette-Odile; it was also to be only the second appearance of Anatole Fistoulari as a guest conductor with the company. Elvin's portrayal of Odile in the third act has improved considerably, the difficult coda being now perfectly executed; her characterisation sparkles like a frozen diamond. In the second act as Odette, her port de bras is almost matchless, being a delight to watch, yet her body does not seem to possess that quality of lyricism, which is so essential to the role.

Anya Linden and Cynthia Mayan danced decoratively in the pas de trois, but David Blair's finishing was untidy.

Why must we have Alexander Grant in the pas de six', he looks completely out of place in the dance, being both too small and unsuited to the costume; there are plenty of tall boys who would be far more at home in the role.

Anne Heaton and Ray Powell most creditably led the Czardas with tremendous verve and dash, whilst the Neapolitan Dance of Alexander Grant and Julia Farron is as intricate, as it is attractive; would it be too much to ask for a complete revision of the Spanish Dance ? The dancers look nearly as embarrassed as we do.

The Devil in the Village

THE *Devil in the Village* was perhaps the most successful of the ballets presented by the Yugoslav Ballet Company, It is a folksy story of how the. Devil comes to the village to play havoc with the love affair of Mirko and Yela, two young peasants; the devil ensnares Mirko, escorts him down to Hell, where he reveals to him a fascinating selection of orgies; meanwhile Yela is to be married off to the local village idiot; Mirko escapes from the devil's clutches to return home, where he displaces the idiot, marries Yela, and all live happily ever after.

The choreography of Pia and Pino Mlakar depends to a large extent on the use of National Dance steps, except in the Hell scene in which a completely different modernistic approach is used with great effect. The ballet opens with a lyrical dance by the two lovers, in which a charming atmosphere of youth is created under the wide blue sky.

The Hell scene in the second act was most exciting, satanic effects were created by the seductive phantoms. whilst the devil's mistress. brilliantly portrayed by Nevenka Bidiin, provided some startling costume effects. The devil, Ivica Sertic, remained a figure of comedy rather than evil, with his gleeful rubbing of hands after each new mischief. Back in the village, Yela is being persuaded to marry the idiot, a squeaking nervous mouse-like individual, who scarcely has the courage to open his mouth, but Mirko comes along fortunately, and the ballet is brought to an end with a Kolo, a light-hearted encircling chain dance.

Sonia Kastl and Nenad Lhotka were delightful as the young peasant lovers, whilst Ivica Sertic no doubt enjoyed himself as the demon king.

The costumes were of a Croatian National style, bright with reds, whites and greens, providing a colourful contrast to the plain blue backcloth: the devil's costume was of an indifferent brownish hue, which was not sufficiently striking.

The music of Fran Lhotka (father of Nenad) was full of charming melodies and gay tunes being easy to dance to, and pleasing to listen to.

Romeo and Juliet

ROMEO and Juliet as given by the Yugoslav Ballet Company was a bitter disappointment; there was little choreographic imagination shown in the conception of the tale in the terms of dance; the sets and the costumes were depressing in the extreme, being of the drabbest possible design; the dancing was only moderate, or rather what dancing there was, since mime featured most prominently in the contents of the work; we were left with Prokofiev's enchanting music, a work which is most faithfully allied to Shakespeare's text.

Sonia Kastl cut a pathetic and wistfully attractive figure as Juliet; she made the most of the slender opportunities that the choreographer had given her, although her technique is not nearly as strong as one would expect from a prima ballerina; fortunately her acting capabilities greatly abetted her in this role. Nenad Lhotka was miscast as Romeo, presenting an almost puritanical figure who completely lacked the fire of a young Italian gallant. Vladislav Sertie as Tybalt was provided with the best dance of the evening: his death scene; it was most realistically portrayed, being almost agonising to witness.

A miniature stumbling block in any balletic production of *Romeo and Juliet*, is the difficulty of portraying Friar Laurence; in this production the portrayal was quite ludicrous, Ivica Kis playing him as a rather insipid dope, who would have been completely useless to consult in a crisis; a small point surely no self-respecting priest would keep a sleeping draught in a cabin trunk beside an altar.

Margarita Froman's choreography was almost entirely listless, mime being used to ridiculous excess. The majority of the steps consisted of no more than a hop, a skip, and a jump.

C.V.

Films and Television: *New Media for Dancers?*

Violetta Elvin

gives a personal reply

THE influence of films and television on classical ballet has caused much controversy in dance circles in the last few years. Can an artist at home equally in films and television give the general public a false idea of ballet as an art; have these media, in fact, cheapened our art? Sundry questions of this type have troubled us. And the majority of 'balletomanes' I have come in contact with have sided against films and television maintaining that these, in their influence, were detrimental to ballet as an art.

Quite frankly it seems to me that this problem has been much exaggerated and altogether made too much of. Ballet as an art changes and rechanges with the times as do other forms of art.

And if ballet wants to avoid becoming a mere museum piece it had better seek to join in with the progressive currents of the surrounding artistic world and amalgamate that which is of value to it. I have no fear for the survival of strictly classical ballet as long as we are able to uphold the respect for its traditions and to continue rallying the support and interest of the younger generations of artists who will come after us.

ON the contrary, I feel that films and television generally have been of real benefit to us. They have helped to make ballet a more popular art and they have given us scope for experiment. They provided us with a new public and new stars who help to fill our theatres.

Indirectly, they have been responsible for bringing greater security to the dancing world as a whole. Ballet seasons are longer now than at any previous time in history, and in more theatres. There now exist more ballet groups and companies than ever before.

And dancers have more opportunities and a greater variety of outlets for their diverse talents.

THE question of whether a ballet dancer can possibly combine a successful stage with a successful film career will depend only on the individual artist concerned. There exists hardly an important ballerina today who has not here or there been engaged in some film or television venture.

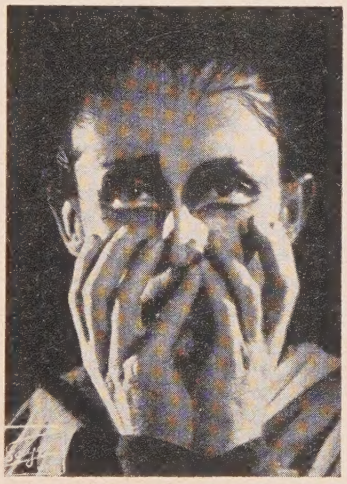
All will have profited from the experience, some will have opened avenues for a new career. Eventually a choice will have to be made. Then it will be for each artist to decide whether he or she feels happier in the new media or in the strictly conventional ballet career.

While I personally would elect to remain a classical dancer, I would gladly participate in any interesting film or television undertaking. Other dancers may make a different choice.

Theirs is as good as mine.

THE TRAÏLINES

: The Brother and Sister Success



Boris Trailine began his ballet studies when thirteen years old in France. He is the son of Russian emigre parents.

His first teacher was Madame Sedova and he later continued with Ivan Clustine (Pavlowa's choreographer) and Nicolas Zvereff.

His stage debut was during the late war in Monte Carlo where he appeared in the principal roles of *Les Sylphides, Le Lac des Cygnes, Le Spectre de la Rose, Scheherezade and Petrouchka.*

He later joined the New Ballet de Monte Carlo for about a year and then the Grand Ballet de Marquis de Cuevas which he left in 1949.

Since then he has been a guest artist with several ballet companies and at most of the important European theatres.

In 1951 he appeared for a season in London dancing as partner of Natalie Krassovska at the Princes Theatre and also appeared on BBC television.

He has also danced at all the major European dance festivals, the Holland Festival, the Grenada Festival, the Palermo Festival and the great spectacle now held annually at the Arena of Verona.

In 1953 he created the principal role in Jean Cocteau's ballet *La Dame A La Licorne* in Munich.

This year he will again participate in the May Festival of Florence after first appearing on TV in Belgium and in Italy.

Trailine is in particular demand for his outstanding qualities as a partner. He has danced, among other stars, with Chauvire, Toumanova, Nora Kaye, Jeanmaire, Darsonval, Krassovska and Violetta Elvin. With the latter, and with Chauvire and Peter van Dyck he appeared last July at Cannes in a gala concert of ballet in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Entente Cordiale.

Héléne Trailine, sister of the above, trained as a classical dancer in the Russian School, she is at home in modern as well as the well-known classical roles. In France she has widely appeared in *Le Lac des Cygnes* and *Giselle,* and in London she recently had a fine personal success during the season of *Les Ballets Janine Charrat* at the Stoll.

Her teachers were Mmes. Sedova, Egorova and Preobrajenska.

Her career began as a *soliste* with the Monte Carlo Ballet but in 1950 she was engaged as *etoile* for Les Ballets des Champs-Elysees.

But her career really got under way two years ago when she joined the Charrat company as *etoile* to dance, in particular, all the classical roles.

This year she will be guest artist at the May Festival in Florence together with her brother with whom, at the moment, she is making a major tour of France and North Africa sponsored by the 'Jeunesses Musicales de France.'

Musician at the Ballet

by

MONTAGUE CALMAN

IN SEARCH OF EXCITEMENT

EXCITEMENT in entertainment is the one thing that keeps me as a critic alive and hopeful. Every time I enter the warmly coloured foyer of the Royal Opera House I am a potential recruit for crying out "A wonderful show !." For the environment puts me in a receptive mood.

The chief commissionaire, Victor Martin, is the most dignified in London and his rich voice manages to make "Take your seats please" sound a royal command; the stage is the largest in London and that alone makes me expectant of great things; the auditorium is often filled with interesting people. And recently when I went along to see the two new ballets the saucily glamorous Kay Kendall was sitting just in front of me. What more could I want ? Just something worthwhile on the stage !

Why Frederick Ashton decided to produce a ballet with Benjamin Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Purcell* is his own business.

What worries me is the result.

The music itself is pleasant without any great sparkle, and depends mostly on the virtuosity of the orchestral players for its sheen. To ask a pit orchestra daily struggling through copious works to give a concert hall performance is perhaps demanding much. And from what I heard that evening, conductor Robert Irving did not make any great demands.

Instead of flooding the large theatre with orchestral colour there was a subdued background of classical sound unlikely to worry even the quietest of singers ! I find it hard to understand why with so many richly orchestrated works in the world a slender piece totally unsuited for a large building should be chosen for a ballet. Britten's variations may be lyrical—thank goodness for that today !—and there is charm and elegance too, but surely there are more virile pieces for the dance ? In any case is it not time Benjamin Britten specially wrote a work for ballet ?

AND RINALDO

The second new ballet at Covent Garden *Rinaldo and Armida*, is a strident, quassi romantic tone poem by Malcolm Arnold with shades of Hollywood (save the celestial harps) to give it the feel of incidental music.

The music was rather thin blooded for what was the sinister part of the ballet, and the storm scene lacked the bite I would have expected from Malcolm Arnold. And in a tender moment of the dance, full of poignancy, when a girl's lifted hand speaks volumes of poetry, the score seemed coldly impersonal. Malcolm Arnold himself conducted the Covent Garden orchestra.

IS THIS ENOUGH ?

For the balletomane, Margot Fonteyn appearing in *Daphnis and Chloe* is sufficient.

But I also want to hear the scintillating score brought to life as I have heard it in the concert halls of Europe. Unfortunately coming at the end of the evening's programme the orchestra did not bring out the sparkle of the work, and Maurice Ravel can become tedious if the musical line of his music begins to sag. With a superb chorus for its opera why did Covent Garden choose to put on an unseen "Special Chorus" ?

The recent French visitors showed us how to mix members of the opera and ballet companies. For *Daphnis and Chloe* we want as much from the music side as we get from Fonteyn and the ballet. Rarely have I shivered at unseen singing before—not even in Cinerama !

Before leaving Covent Garden this month I must comment on Cranko's ballet sequence for the opera *Aida*. Frankly I consider that it almost parodies Verdi's fine music and is totally out of keeping with the spirit of the work as a musical whole. Verdi conceived the ballet and opera as one work and the dance should be a diversion not a distraction.

A SMALLER FRAME

If there is grandeur at Covent Garden, there is something unpretentious and simple about the Sadler's Wells Theatre. The journey out to Islington itself is a sobering thought. The clean lines of the theatre and the earnestness of those putting on the shows make me feel as if I am taking part in an experiment. But sometimes the audience is apt to take itself too seriously there—with frightful results.

Andree Howard's *Selina* was revived there recently. Terrified by the pontifical approach to ballet the audience sat in solid silence while Guy Warrack's skilful arrangement of Rossini's music crackled with malicious glee and Howard's choreography sparked with fun. Then one girl in the audience laughed, and the doyens of the heavy approach to ballet fussed, hushed and shushed. Until it dawned on these tragic apostles in the audience that ballet like any other art can be full of fun. And they laughed with intellectual emphasis !

John Lanchbery secured some very fine playing from the Sadler's Wells orchestra for Rossini. A light, polished approach is essential or else the music could sound quite vulgar.

Of the other two ballets in the same programme, one was as pleasant musically as the other was not. Charles Mackerras has made a delightful score out of Arthur Sullivan's music for *Pineapple Poll*, but Richard Arnell's music for *Harlequin in April* seemed to me as pretentious as the endless trippings that were going on on the stage.

The story of *The Bartered Bride* (Sadler's Wells Theatre) is so slight that composer Smetana decided to incorporate a ballet not as in *Aida* for diversion, but as a major rib for the short opera. At the Wells Sasa Machov's choreography captures the spirit of the music which was tastefully brought out by the orchestra (Lanchbery conducting).

FORWARDS BACKWARDS

The artist who throws away his creative roots in an intellectual search for new blooms often goes backwards.

Igor Strawinski with his *Danses Concertantes* (now at the Sadler's Wells Theatre) is a good example of this. Strawinski wrote this arid though not unmelodic trot in 1941/2 but it now appears as a work of the 1920s.

In style the work owes more to musical comedy and could be described as a hospitalised *The Boy Friend*—without, of course, the wit.

Occasionally the rich heritage of American rhythm breaks through the antiseptic douches of meaningless mazes of jigs but nothing is left in one's mind.

Ballerina and American Princess

—from page Three

eloquent, if brittle line; but she was criticised for her lack of dramatic grandeur and the deeper emotions. The dry Balanchine choreography with its stress on technical skill, was not helpful to the development of these atributes. Even in revivals, such as *Swan Lake*, he made so many alterations that the Swan Princess was lost in importance to the work as a whole, while there was little scope for characterisation.

NEW RADIANCE

Since then, this dancer has discovered a new radiance and warmth, and the technician has become the artist. Each season she appears to go from strength to strength; while in further tours she has been acclaimed all over Europe. After a tremendous success in New York last year as the Sugar Plum Fairy in a full length revival of *The Nutcracker*, she was given leave of absence to return to the first company with which she had danced, the Ballets Russe de Monte Carlo. She is now concluding a triumphant six months coast-to-coast tour, for which her salary is said to be larger than that paid to any contemporary dancer.

HER DAY

Justly proud of her achievements as the first American-born ballerina, the Oklahoma State Senate in 1953 declared June 29th, Maria Tallchief Day. People crowded in for miles around to celebrate the occasion, and Fairfax was gay with flags and banners while everyone wore badge ribbons bearing the legend, "Welcome Maria". The ballerina, a stylish girl of medium height with olive skin, neat dark head, and long slender limbs, arrived in time for the moring at reception. This was at the home of her parents, now returned to Fairfax, and was for state officials, relatives and friends. It was followed by a dinner for over a hundred guests, which included Indians delicacies such as squaw bread fried in deep fat, and dried corn boiled with beef, as well as American dishes. In the afternoon, in the presence of the Governor of the State, the Tribal Council of the Osages, and a large gathering, she was made a Princess of the Tribe, and an honorary Mayor of Fairfax. The dancer, with ancient and colourful ritual, was invested in the ceremonial dress—the beaded and feathered head-dress, the fringed blanket and moccasins, of the Tribe. The day ended with a large supper party and dancing. The next morning Maria Tallchief said good-bye to her parents and left for Colorado where her company was on tour: for even if she was a princess, she was also a ballerina.

APPROACH TO BALLET

: *The first article in a new series based on interviews with N. Nicolaeva-Legat and written by Elisabeth H. C. Corathiel*

BRITAIN is full of ballet-lovers who dream of dancing or long to teach. They are told—quite rightly—that the process of becoming really proficient is long and arduous. It calls for great patience, untiring persistence. The slogan is "slow but sure". Yet unfortunately it is also true that the world is full of harassed, frustrated students who love ballet but cannot, despite all their patience, persistence and hard work, reach a really reliable state of proficiency, because they have got hold of "the wrong end of the stick".

How slow must a system be to produce really *sure* results ?

"People used to cross the Atlantic by sailing boat", said Madame Legat. 'It took Columbus a long time to discover America. If someone had said in those days: "Wait another 500 years and you'll be able to cross by supersonic plane in a few hours" they would have been considered mad.

ON NATURE

"The kernel of art never changes because true beauty is based on Nature, which is eternal. But circumstances change and the intellect quickly adapts itself to new conditions, physical features following the mental picture. That is called evolution". In teaching, too, there are progressive methods and static methods; also some that may be called retrogressive.

The world-renowned teacher of dancing, Christian Johannsen, taught Nicholas Legat, who founded the Legat-Johannsen System. Nicolaeva Legat, herself trained by this system, in the course of the many years since she took over the Legat school on her husband's death has evolved several ideas of her own in ballet technique and its teaching. These, while never departing from the purity of the classical Russian school, do provide many valuable short cuts, which have enabled her to turn out dancers of professional confidence and efficiency at an exceptionally early age.

In cases where fundamental principles differ, the problem can best be solved by submitting the opposing methods to competition and arbitration (provided, of course, the competitors are certain on whom they can depend). Such a challenge Madame Legat expresses herself ready to accept at any time.

"A Nijinski could clear a stage of the size of Covent Garden in two leaps", says Madame Legat. "Ask any ordinary person to as much as jump, and he will scarcely rise more than an inch from the ground. But take the average person and teach him to jump by *pushing* from the floor, and watch the effect. There is a great difference between pushing and merely jumping. Provided a pupil has learnt how to do the steps, from which attitude to obtain the best balance, the best *spring* to counteract the forces of gravity, quite advanced technical feats can be mastered in a comparatively short time.

ACCENT ON YOUTH

"This is very important in an age which places the accent on youth.

If a pupil lavishes too many years on training, she can be displaced by a younger competitor before she even qualifies to make a career. Furthermore, in youth the mind is more receptive and the body more supple. Alert mental faculties and quick physical response are an ideal combination for the teacher to work upon—and I am speaking of the masses, not of the few talented exceptions, like my former pupil Moira Shearer, whose inborn instinct helps to guide them".

"Were you not recently involved in an interesting controversy regarding the pirouette ?" I asked.

"Yes, and it is interesting that you should bring up this subject", said Madame Legat, "because I have lately been examining hundreds of children in competition, scarcely one of whom could perform a pirouette, although they had been receiving instruction for years. It was quite common for competitors to say to me: 'I'm no good at pirouettes'. 'Who told you that ?' I would ask. 'My teacher', was the reply. Yet I have in my school small girls, aged 9 and 10, and of quite ordinary talent, who can show without the slightest hesitation three or four clean, energetic, controlled pirouettes. They know exactly how to do them."

There are of course a great variety of pirouettes, and no dancer who takes up ballet seriously can consider herself ready for her career until she has mastered them.

BALANCE

The method of approach is always basically the same. Before the actual rotation is executed, the necessary balance must be established in the initial position and this calls for a special method. Let us take the basic pirouette from second position. These are Madame Legat's instructions:

1. Before even the second position is taken up, the student must stand in fifth position and rise on high half-toes. This is the very first balance that has to be achieved. Be very steady in this position.

2. Get front leg slightly raised from ground and place, pointed, in front of ankle of supporting leg; find steady balance in this position.

3. Remaining in this position, carefully open to side the leg which is raised, still maintaining balance.

4. Drop heel and bend knee of supporting leg, still keeping raised leg in air at side.

5. Remaining with supporting leg bent at knee, carefully place the foot of raised leg in second position on ground, still keeping the weight of body on supporting leg (although it will look from front as if the weight is evenly distributed on both legs).

6. Push off from the heel with both feet, straightening knees, and remove leg which has just been raised back on front of ankle of supporting leg, bringing arms into second position in front of body. Hold this position as long as balance permits. You can execute as many rotations as your balance will allow. The rotation will take place when you give a strong rotatory impetus with your arms

The method of throwing the arms and of giving the necessary impetus for the number of rotations desired also has its specific rules, which will be dealt with in another article.

ADVERTISERS' ANNOUCEMENTS

ANTONIO

Feb. 21: *For six weeks, at the Palace Theatre. A "completely new" programme (excepting Antonio's Zapateado, of course announced. Carmen Rojas has replaced Flora Albaicin, but Rosita Segovia remains as partner. Two world premieres during the season are Rondena to Albeniz music, as is the other—Albaicin The London premiere will also take place of Antonio's of Falla's Amor Brujo.*

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

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29th MARCH, 1955

Applications for tickets for this performance CANNOT be accepted NOW

MADAME CHRYSANTHÈME

A ballet in One Act freely based on a novel by Pierre Loti

Music by Alan Rawsthorne
Choreography by
Frederick Ashton
Scenery and costumes by
Isabel Lambert

From page 5

and Fifield

yet she has to find her feet, as was in the case of David Blair, she cannot yet project her personality over the vast orchestra pit into the auditorium at Covent Garden.

In the circumstances, she was most definitely not ready to dance the role of Swanhilde; her performance was too small and restrained and almost mechanical in its conception.

To end on a happier note, let me say that with careful grooming she could easily become the best Swanhilde in the company today, but she must not be rushed too quickly into ballerina roles, for it will be only to her own detriment, for she has remarkable talent and it must be given time to become acclimatised to her new surroundings.

Brian Shaw as Franz did not dance as well as usual; although his partnering was as reliable as ever, he made one or two minor faults in the last variation.

The *Coppelius* of Franklin White was a definite disappointment; his characterisation was twofold, in the midst of the ballet he adopted a most sinister expression, which was completely alien to his dotty middle aged gentleman of the first act.

V.C.

My ideal Ballerina

JAY NORMAN CONTRIBUTES TO THE SERIES

FOR many of us today our ideal ballerina is a dream creature of super-human qualities, because we tend to put all our unacknowledged longings and ideals into her person, and she has become the symbol of beauty, tranquility and effortless power. That the habit is a popular form of escapism is surely not only because of the wave of balletomania, now perhaps a little past its peak, but also because of the peculiar legendary nature of the art of ballet, which records dancers of the past by romanticised lithographs, by pen pictures drawn by particularly impressionable critics, by word of mouth and by the handing down of an essentially artificial and stylised technique.

I venture to think that if we could see films of dancers of the past, much of the glamour would be found to have faded. But, and here's the inescapable fact, no film or photograph could possibly give any idea of the individual personality of a dancer and the interplay between her and her audience.

We might know what her features were like, her shape and, in some degree, the quality of her movement, but we could never know how her personality came over the footlights. In other words, the whole is much more than the sum of the parts. And so we continue to dream.

HANDICAP ?

My ideal ballerina is not necessarily beautiful in face and form, in fact beauty of face is often a handicap, but she gives the illusion of beauty on the stage. Perhaps Ulanova is the most outstanding example, even in a film.

In Romeo and Juliet, *for instance, a short, not so young woman, unflatteringly costumed, runs into the ballroom, and a little later you come away with the impression that you have seen the Juliet of your dreams.*

The ballerina I am portraying has authority of presence and movement, of the same quality as that which appears to be common to Russian dancers, who take the stage as though it were their right, and at the same time she has an appearance of humility and sincerity.

Musical sensibility is one of her most conspicuous attributes, enabling her to phrase her movements, and simple, harmonious port-de-bras, with no trace of mannerisms. Fonteyn has these qualities.

It goes without saying that my ballerina has a superlative technique but one which is always subordinated to the requirements of the role she is portraying—technique as a means to an end, in this instance that of greater expressiveness. Chauvire uses her technique in this way. My dream ballerina also has ballon, elevation and the appearance of lightness, and yet gives the impression of steel, covered in silk. Grey has these attributes to a very marked degree.

COMMUNICATE

Lastly, my ideal has the ability to communicate with her audience, not the familiar, personal communication of the variety stage, but a giving out of personality, a sharing in an artistic experience, as though she were saying to us: "I am doing this for you. See how easy it is".

At the same time she remains slightly detached, as though conscious that her art sets her apart from her fellows. Beriosova has this quality in her work. An example in action that comes immediately to mind is in the preparation for the solo variation for Aurora *during the Rose Adage in the first act of* The Sleeping Beauty.

Off stage, this remarkable creature is a little reserved, keeping her own counsel, but gracious and humble in her attitude towards her fans, friends and colleagues, neat in her dress and person and quiet and dignified in speech.

But you cannot meet this ideal ballerina of mine because she does not exist. If she did we would not have our dreams and the impossible would have happened—because perfection would have been realised.

He that

Everyone who enjoys thinks that the principal thing to the tree is the fruit, but in point of fact the principal thing to it is the seed. —Herein lies the difference between them that create and them that enjoy.

Friedrich Nietzsche

TWO new ballets, *Rinaldo and Armida*, and *Variations on a theme of Purcell*, have already been produced for the Sadlers Wells Company by Frederick Ashton this year; a third with a Chinese theme is now in rehearsal; in a few weeks' time he will be flying to Copenhagen, where he is to produce a three act ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*, to Prokofiev's music, for the Royal Danish Ballet—all this in the space of six months, during which time he will continue to appear with the company in the few roles in which he still dances, notably that of Kostchei in the *Firebird*.

Ashton was born and lived in South America for several years, a fact which no doubt greatly added to the authenticity in the construction of his characterisation of the sleek Dago in the *Tango and Tarantella* in *Facade*, for which he designed the choreography in 1931.

RAMBERT

Marie Rambert played an important role in the nurture of the career of the young Ashton, for it was she who first persuaded him to devise the choreography for a ballet; the result, *The*

creates – ASHTON

Tragedy of Fashion, which was included in a revue at the Lyric, Hammersmith, in 1926 . . Three years later he again collaborated with Mme Rambert, an association which lasted for several years in which time he produced such ballets as *The Lady of Shallot*, *Pomona*, *The Lord of Burleigh* to name but a few.

1935 was a significant year for he was to join the Vic-Wells organisation for the first time, a company for whom he was to produce nearly all his major works. Perhaps the one person who has influenced the career of Ashton as a choreographer more than any other, has been Margot Fonteyn. Since he first created the role of the Young Bride in *Le Baiser de la Fee*, for her, he has fashioned ballets in which her genius has shone.

Between 1936 and the outbreak of war, he produced many important works for the Sadlers Wells company, including, *Apparitions*, *Les Patineurs*, *Nocturne and Horoscope*.

FINE WORK

During the war years he enlisted with the Royal Air Force, where he had little opportunity and less time to think of ballet; however his creative genius had only lain dormant and not been extinguished in those five years, for in 1946 he was to produce what many still consider to be his finest work, *Symphonic Variations*; this ballet, which was not at first intended to be an abstract composition, achieved an astounding success and firmly endorsed the fact that he was still one, if not the greatest of the principal three choreographers of the Western World.

The next milestones in his career were the ill-fated *Tiresias*, which received such a drubbing from the press, the resplendent production of *Sylvia*, and his successful coronation ballet, *Homage to the Queen*.

NEW BALLET

In the past eighteen months people have been crying out for a new Ashton ballet; he answered their call characteristically by providing two on the same night; it was no small undertaking.

Neither *Rinaldo and Armida* nor *Variations on a Theme of Purcell*, received really enthusiastic notices, yet in a way Ashton succeeded in doing what he set out to accomplish, to provide a vehicle for Svetlana Beriosova and Michael Somes, and in a lighter vein a divertissement for the younger members of the company; although much has been written in criticism of the decor, the dancing and the music of this second work, few have condemned the choreography, in fact it has received considerable praise.

One last consoling thought, Ashton has always been a choreographer who has not been content to rest on his laurels by providing revival after revival of his earlier successes, unlike several modern choreographers.

Julia Farron, Michael Somes, Svetlana Beriosova, Ronald Hynd—watch, and are watched by, the hand-to-head Frederick Ashton. All the photographs on these two pages are by Mike Davis.

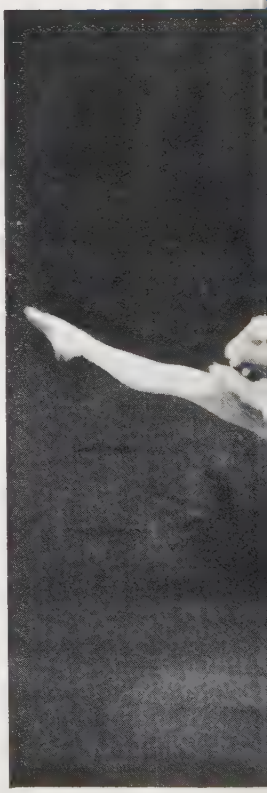
RINALDO and ARMIDA

The four photographs above, by Angus McBean, are of Frederick Ashton's new work, Rinaldo and Armida reviewed in the last issue of BALLET TODAY.

Michael Somes (Rinaldo) and Svetlana Beriosova (Armida) are pictured during the grand pas de deux. Next, the Sorceress, Julia Farron, with Beriosova and Somes. Third, another shot of the pas de deux and, lastly, from the finale—showing the excellent decor of Peter Rice, and Rinaldo's friend, danced by Ronald Hynd.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF PURCELL

Variations on a Theme of Purcell was reviewed in the February BALLET TODAY. Here Houston Rogers pictures the second new Ashton ballet showing, c u t o u t above, Alexander Grant; on the left—the Peter Snow decor which is extremely better photogenically than it is on stage with Rowena Jackson, Nadia Nerina and Elaine Fifield. On the right: Nerina, Fifield and Jackson



. . . and the Ashton ballets

Frederick Ashton's third new work of this season, Madame Chrystheme (to Rawsthorne music) will be reviewed in the next issue

THE news that Festival Ballet was to come back to London without a New York appearance, and that Sadler's Wells was to open in September at the hall which Festival could not book, aroused interest in London during the same week.

Hurok, then, will have two major companies on tour—Ballet Theatre and the Wells, plus several chamber groups. And the Wells will have to repeat its first American success and beat down the word-of-mouth disappointment caused by the Wells Theatre Ballet.

Meanwhile it was both commercially and personally unfortunate that Festival Ballet could not put the cream on their successful tour by reaping New York's plaudits. It must have disappointed the company (although it did put forward their holiday !) and **Dolin** himself.

HE, apparently, has planned to live a full winter this year. Apart from the company's Australasian tour, **Dolin** will have his St. George chore in *Where The Rainbow Ends* and he will be reviving another Christmas play in London.

For **John Gilpin,** too the year is potentially overfull. While in the United States **Gilpin** tested for the **Nijinski** role for which **Istvan Rabovsky** tested last year.

With **Dolin** back in London for *St. George*, Festival also lost **Noel Rossana** who tore a ligament and flew back for treatment here which included seeing something more of her husband, publicist **John Gorst,** than the company's tight schedule had previously allowed.

NEXT month Festival Ballet tour Spain and may appear at the Granada Festival before returning to London for the Festival Hall season in July. During this season **Anton Dolin's** new ballet, *Permit to Yesterday*, will be premiered with music by **Jean-Michel Damasse** and decor by **Wakhevitch. Dolin** also hopes to tour South America or Japan with a soloist group including **Gilpin, Violette Verdy** and the recovered **Nathalie Krassovska.**

Not triplets—just triple exposure. Aura Fainio is caught thrice in a trice by the A.P. cameraman who created this unique shot for BALLET TODAY.

JOANNA DENISE is continuing the classes at West-street where **George Goncharov** taught. She was **Goncharov's** assistant and deputy and was herself trained under **Karsavina, Kyasht, Serguev** and by **Vera Volkova** and **Goncharov.**

JAN MAYER, the dancer well remembered for his work with **Diaghilev, de Basil** and other companies, died—his widow, **Nathalie Branitzka** writes me—during December.

EUGENE RUBIN DE RAYS, the photographer responsible for last month's cover (which has caused so much interest) is principally a fashion specialist and, although French, was born in Russia. After travelling very widely, he studied photography in Berlin and opened his own studio in Paris.

"Ballet photography" he writes "is my violin d'Ingres." Frequently in England, where he prefers the ageing Ritz to the more modern Claridge's or sauve Westbury, his favourites are—he says—"**Margot Fonteyn,** pink morning fog in London, the National Gallery, Stourhead Park Wilts.—an ideal decor for Lac—English cloth, cigarettes and tea, the English mentality and style of life."

I, personally, quite simply like **M. de Rays'** photographs.

A letter from 19-year-old ballet enthusiast **Hirashi Nakakohara,** 1.130, **Shimokomatsu, Katsushika,** Tokyo, Japan may bring an answer from a reader. I do not want this column used as a penfriend's corner but **Hirashi** promises to write fully on Japanese dancing, customs and clothes if English dancers or balletgoers will correspond with him.

The Association of Ballet Clubs is to hold a Summer School at Bournemouth in August. About seven guineas inclusively should cover the session. Will any interested reader contact Miss **Greenlaw** at 95 Hornsey Lane, N.6 ?

THE foundation stone of the Daily Express's page four—

A COMMENTARY ON

Beachcomber—apparently reads his ballet press. When **Dali's** wheelbarrow whimsy does become a ballet, the creators of *Selina* may take delight in having led *Beachcomber* to the suggestion. He wrote:

"UNLESS a parody of a ballet is outrageously ridiculous and crammed with wild exaggeration, it must be difficult to distinguish what is going on from the real thing.

I read that a subtle parody was taken so seriously by an audience the other day that someone who saw the joke, and laughed loudly, was hushed by those in the neighbouring seats. I hope **Senor Salvador Dali,** who is reported to be writing a film about a woman who falls in love with a wheelbarrow, can be persuaded to make the film into a ballet. When the heroine throws herself into the wheelbarrow, instead of into the arms of her dancing partner, there will not be a dry eye in the house, or a dry mouth if the bars are open."

TWENTIETH Century-Fox did not start *There's no Business Like Show Business* with a budget, they just put a credit through on **Fort Knox.** It is the fastest, fullest, funniest musical in years with a trump-hand cast, swift direction and a musical score by **Irving Berlin.**

The film stars **Marilyn Monroe, Ethel Merman, Donald O'Connor, Mitzi Gaynor, Dan Dailey** and **Johnnie Ray.** Everybody—even **Ray**—dances in this vaudeville tale with CinemaScopic trimmings.

The dance production numbers, such as Heatwave and the live fountains idea, are original, fast and so overfull that not a dancing extra in lower California can have been resting at the time. The huge CinemaScope screen is all but engulfed by thousands of dancers who come up line upon line like a mass production belt.

O'Connor has several good spots, but his drenching from the live, female fountains is the best.

E BALLET MONTH

Decorations throughout are quite fabulous and it is perhaps unfair that only a six minute taxi-ride separated such decors from those of **Peter Rice** and **Peter Snow** at the Wells ! **Monroe** is no dancer but she does have redeeming features. **Mitzi Gaynor's** work is outstanding and her personality is in top gear throughout.

Certainly, with *Carmen Jones* and now *There's No Business Like Show Business*, this must be 20th-Fox's musical year. And with *Oklahoma*, *Brigadoon* and *Porgy and Bess* to follow, 1955 should certainly be the musical year of all time.

WELDON'S, responding to the frequent requests we hear for paper patterns of a ballet dress, have in fact produced such a pattern for dancers (and mothers !) who desire to make up such a dress at home. Details will be found on another page of this issue.

VINCENTE ESCUDERO, whom I profiled last year in BALLET TODAY ("Eagle of the Dance"), is currently giving a tour of farewell performances in the United States . . . . **Frances James**, 66 Hamilton-terrace, N.W 8, has formed a committee to encourage young talent which includes **Anton Dolin, Irina Baronova, Lydia Sokolova, Mona Inglesby, Arthur Benjamin** and **Michael Northen** . . . . Two possible musicals this season are *Televive* and *The Mint*, both from R.B. Salisbury . . . . . Preceding Festival Ballet's Australasian tour, the Borovansky Ballet is rushing through their largest-ever tour . . . . The Munich Opera Festival will include three ballet performances by the Bavarian State Opera Ballet . . . . **Roma Heritage** wrote a factual, excellently-pointed letter to *The Stage* which appeared in the January 20 issue . . . .

SEVERAL musicals are possible in the British studios this year, **Jose Ferrer** already planning to film *Golden City* here (as a play, at the Adelphi, it was a deserved failure) . . . . There is very definite talk of a new, major ballet company to depend mainly on provincial and oversea touring for its existence . . . . But dancers should be very wary of working unpaid for a management currently claiming to have a tour coming for its company—consult Equity before working for anyone . . . . .

CONSIDERABLE progress is being made in Ireland in the establishment of ballet schools, with the idea of having. eventually, a full-time professional ballet company based in Dublin. About 45,000 Dublin people went to see one of the visiting ballet companies, and in Cork, Dublin, Belfast and other cities there is great local activity.

APRIL OLRICH is now filming . . . . **Alfred Rodrigues** has left Sadler's Wells, **John Hart** taking over as ballet master . . . **Rodrigues** is choreographing for *Rossalinda*, the Powell-Pressburger film, in which **Kenneth Melville** dances . . . . **Margot Fonteyn** may go to Finland within the next two months . . . . The Icelandic State Theatre may enter the ballet scene . . . . the rumours as to Festival Ballet are increasing but facts are missing and the company's plans well-paced . . . . **Mantovani** has recorded a new "Ballerina" melody on the Decca label . . . .

Sol Hurok has seven dance attractions lined for this winter: Sadler's Wells, Ballet Theatre, Danilova Company, Antonio Company, Scot's Guards Band and Dancers, Kabuki Company and the Inbal Israeli Troupe . . . . hard-going for Balanchine—and not by chance, perhaps ? . . . . **Pearl Primus** has reformed her dance group for Kenneth Allen Associates and may play Britain next year . . . . **Alicia Alonso** returned to Ballet Theatre this month after wasting her time and talent in trying to carry ballet in Cuba . . . . Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, the reformed **Serge Denham** troupe, rating a very bad press but quite wieldy grosses with, on last report, over £21,000 for eleven performances in Chicago . . . .

IT is possible that a ballet label will be launched by a major recording company, although Decca-Vogue's Contrepointe is now definitely shelved . . . . **Anton Dolin** is writing for Modern Woman . . . . **Caryl Brahms** was featured in *Argosy* recently . . . and what is happening in the ballet department of the Daily Telegraph ? . . . . **Fernau Hall** has visited Canada recently . . . .

A ballet show is certainly a possibility from one American-controlled advertising agency's commercial video office . . . The February Holiday magazine spotlights Israel and its dancing . . . . You may soon have your opportunity of interviewing your favourite dancer if a radio idea, now in the preparatory stage, comes off . . . . BALLET TODAY readers who complain of the BBC's lack of dance focus should study regional and oversea services, although the corporation's home services do neglect the dance . . . .

Genia Melikova of the De Cuevas Ballet, and reading Ballet Today (*Photo: de Rays*)

Ballerina Photographs

The Postcards of Sonia Arova and Colette Marchand are now temporarily out of print in this series. Readers ordering sets should therefore only send for 10 titles. Price 6d. each card. Postage 1½d extra.

JOSE GRECO starred for the fifth time on **Ed Sullivan's** *Toast of The Town* video spectacular over CBS . . . . He is currently at the N.Y. Waldorf . . . **Anthony Tudor** has rejoined Ballet Theatre to revive *Pillar of Fire* and *Romeo and Juliet* . . . . Ballet Rambert plan two new ballets for their Sadler's Wells summer season . . . **Hugh Laing** will again dance with Ballet Theatre on its New York opening . . . . **Ruth and Paul Draper** opened at the Bijou on Broadway for a three week season . . . the Winnipeg Ballet have launched a 50,000-dollar fund drive . . . . *The Nutcracker Suite* earned 271,000-dollars for Balanchine's N.Y. City Ballet in its seven week Broadway run . . . . the "show" will be revived for this coming Christmas . . . . *Vittorio*, the over-costly N.Y. Metropolitan ballet by **Zachary Solov**, failed to rouse the press and is admitted a failure although lavishly staged and starring **Mia Slavenska** . . . . the ballet cost just under £18,000 .

The book review section mistakenly gave publishing imprint last month to Pitman's for *Ballets of Today*. Messrs Pitman are not the publishers of this book.

THERE are three piano records I recommend readers to hear—*Pictures at an Exhibition* played by Pennario Capitol CCL 7525, and *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, London TW 91035, with other Ravel works, played by Jean-Michel Damase, composer of music for several French ballets. The former was used for Algo's *Visions* in the repertoire of the late International Ballet Company and the latter for Ashton's ballet. These are possibly known to most balletgoers only in their orchestral versions, so that these discs will show that often much more enjoyment is to be had from works in their original form.

The third record is of Brahms' Intermezzi and Rhapsodies, HMV.ALP 1213, well interpreted by Rubinstein even though lightness is not his greatest virtue. It includes the *Rhapsody in E flat, Op. 119. No. 4*, which you will remember as one of the variations in Lifar's *Grand Pas* for the Paris Opera—this and all the others are entrancing.

MOST excellent conducting comes from Munchinger with the Suisse Romande Orchestra in two great overtures, Gluck's *Alceste* and Schumann's *Manfred*, Decca LW 5144. In all respects, it is a very good disc, which will find its way into many homes. So will Decca LXT 2991 Music of Johann and Joseph Strauss Volume II, though at the risk of being too critical, I found, on occasions, the recording a little hard and vibrant.

It is a pity, as we need much more of this type of music in the present day world to counter, on the one hand, the popular composer's continuous bemoaning of the loss of his gal—you really cannot blame her !—and on the other hand, the "advanced" composer's ambition to impair ones hearing with percussive discords at all costs.

When Robert Helpmann took his curtain at the end of *Miracle in the Gorbals*, it made one feel that here was an actor who had given his all. but it was Moyra Fraser's delicious drunk that made me smile more broadly. Columbia's excellent disc 33CX 1205 with the composer, Sir Arthur Bliss, conducting, brought it all back to me and the desire to see it again.

Not only *Gorbals*, but also his ballet, *Hamlet*. There have been few ballets, if any, to equal its dramatic intensity, but it needs a Helpmann to put it over. Fistoulari follows the markings of Tchaikovsky's *Hamlet Overture*, Parlophone PMC 1014, most faithfully and the recording is excellent.

THE reverse side, *Romeo and Juliet*—used by so many choreographers—is equally good and I prefer it to Columbia 33CX1208, an excellent recording. Here Markevitch's conducting is exciting—and what drive ! However this virtue, to be a virtue, must be controlled and allow one to appreciate the finer details of light nad shade in the music. The *Polovtsian Dancers* from *Prince Igor* and Moussorgsky's *Night on the Bare Mountain*, included on this disc, are stirring.

It is not often that we have the opportunity to hear the whole of Handel's *Water Music*, so that it is with satisfaction that we turn to Boyd Neel's sound conducting of this orchestra, Decca LXT 2988, in almost all the items. Some of these were selected by Andrée Howard for her ballet for the R.A.D. Production Club, simply called, *Suite of Dances*.

THERE are three Extended Play records which include works used for ballet. Firstly HMV. 7EB6009 with Rubinstein playing Listz's *Valse Oubliee No. 1* most attractively. This, of course, is the pas de deux in the ballroom scene of *Apparitions*—the only scene that really holds my interest. Claudio Arrau gives a very good rendering of Granados' *The Lover and the Nightingale*, Columbia SEL 1523, which Antonio and Pillar Lopez have used and also Charnley in his *Go Lips for Comfort* for Ballet Workshop. And then, a satisfactory performance conducted by Weldon of two of the loveliest of Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, the 8th and 9th, on Columbia SED 5520.

B.C.

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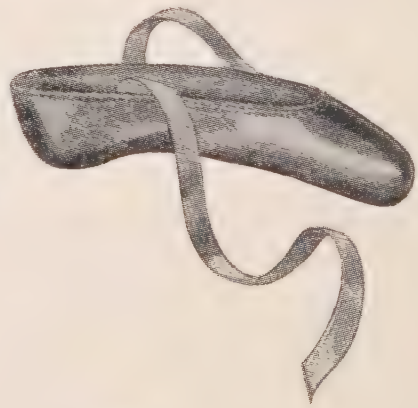

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Books

Ballet is His Business

—More Dancing Memoirs from Sol Hurok

The World of Ballet. By S. Hurok. (*Robert Hall*, 18*s*)

What Sol Hurok doesn't know about ballet is nobody's business, for ballet is his business, and business has been good. Since the day he "first bent over the expressive hand of Anna Pavlowa as she stood among the elephants in Charles P. Dillingham's Hippodrome, his successful mission has been to bring ballet to America and America to ballet.

This famous impressario, who arrived in America from Russia as a boy of seventeen with only a dollar in his pocket, has been concerned with the discovery, promotion, and presentation of dancing talent, with its financing and risk, for nearly forty years.

Every well-known dance personality is presented in this book from Fuller to Fonteyn, and he describes with gusto the many balletic storms he has braved. Some read like thrillers. Such as when the bitterness caused by the casting of three rival ballerinas made it necessary, on a first night, to have a squad of detectives in the house disguised as stagehands, the use of stage traps and elevators excluded, and all loose scenery securely fastened to the stage. Even the flowers thrown by Giselle in the last act were firmly nailed down—to the embarrassment of the ballerina !

The ramifications of the various Russian companies, with their dissensions and the constant defaction of dancers from one company to another, makes tedious reading, and the potted biographies of Sadler's Wells dancers tells what we all know.

But, by and larger, there is never a dull moment, and there is no doubt as to the love of Sol Hurok for the art he has served so assiduously. There are a number of illustrations from photographs.

Alicia Markova. Dancers of Today, No. 6. By Hugh Fisher. (*A. & C. Black*, 6*s*.)

This well-illustrated record of a number of Markova's outstanding roles, together with some biographical details, comes at the end of a year that gave us three memorable visits from this famous ballerina: with the de Cuevas company, on her own concert tour, and at the Festival Hall, where even the mediocre choreography by Taras for the ballet sequence in *Where the Rainbow Ends* could not dim the lustre of her unique art.

Turning over the pages, one is reminded of the diversity of Markova's many roles and, in spite of her long association with Dolin, the number of her partners. There can be very few well-known dancers that have not partnered her. A pleasant souvenir of a great dancer.

A Picture History of Ballet. By Arnold Haskell. (*Hulton Press*, 25*s*.)

"To go forward, it is important to know what went before", Alicia Markova once said to me, and there is a depth of truth in that statement. The art of ballet is based on the great traditions of the past, and these have a living and practical value for the ballet of today. There could be no easier way of beginning to know what went before than in looking at this history in pictures. The long journey of ballet through centuries is described in a few concise pages of introductory text, and then shown in a profusion of pictures. It could have been no easy task to find and select these 558 illustrations from old prints, drawings, paintings and photographs, and almost every important phase of ballet history is shown. Many of the pictures are, of necessity, familiar, but many, also, are quite new. Here are a few that especially took my fancy—an unusual and enchanting drawing of La Camargo wearing the first heelless slipper (is this but a contemporary drawing ?) a portrait of Pauline Duvernay in old age and strangely like Preobrajenska as she is today, a photograph of Degas' dancer model, and a spirited drawing of the theatre bus, pulled by four horses abreast, taking the students or junior dancers to the Maryinsky, the young Nijinsky in class, the beauty of Pavlova and Karsavina in many pictures, and a rare one of Spessiva who looks into a mirror and smiles, but on her sad and mysterious face, no smile is reflected back.

Facade and Other Early Ballets by Frederick Ashton: Les Sylphides Le Carnaval, Le Spectre De La Rose. By Joseph Sandon. The Stories of the Ballet Series (*A. & C. Black*, 3*s*.)

These little books are just the thing to slip into one's bag or coat pocket to read on a long bus ride or standing in the ballet ticket queue. They are no larger than a pocket diary, but excellent value for the money. Well written and full of information about the ballets concerned, they include a number of photographic illustrations: those of the second book are the better reproduced.

P.C.

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A Ballet Lover's Odyssey

Robert Paterson reflects on a twelve year gap and upon a lifetime of ballet

LITTLE did I dream, when I last saw the Sadler's Wells Ballet at the New Theatre in April, 1942, *that more than twelve years were to elapse before I should see it again. Yet, had I but known it, I was destined in the interim to see many performances of Ballet in other parts of the world.*

The first of these occurred in China, later that year, at a place called Changsha, not far from Hankow, where I was serving with the British Military Mission. A friend of mine, an American teacher, invited me one evening to witness a curious performance by a Chinese officer who specialised in ritualistic Chinese dances when off duty. I have but a somewhat hazy recollection of the event, but can recall slow, intensely dignified movements, some of which consisted in the dancer standing on one foot whilst he gazed meditatively at the highly raised big toe of the other. Endless repetitions of this posture very nearly put me to sleep. Perhaps that was the idea !

My next rather distant contact with Ballet occurred when I was accompanying a Chinese general on a tour of Northern India, in 1944. *We had arrived at a spot high up in the foot-hills of the Himalayas whence one had a superb view of the distant peaks. In the middle distance, far down in the valley, stood the little village of Almora, where Uday Shankar still trained his dancers. Later that year I saw a performance by his troupe in Bombay.*

It is remarkable how much the Indian dancer can express with the hands, and very necessary in this type of dancing, where the legs and feet are comparatively static. But the monotonous music (to Western ears) and the constant beating of various drums produced in me a feeling of being hypnotised, which I can't say that I much cared for. As an experience this dancing is certainly interesting, but to appreciate it one needs to be educated up to the esoteric meanings implicit in each movement, without which it is apt to become boring.

The beginning of 1947 *found me posted to Berlin as entertainments officer. Here I generally managed to see a performance of Ballet every fortnight. I had seen no real Ballet since* 1942, *and now revelled in performances given by both the town opera troupe and that of the State Opera, the latter having as choreographer and ballet-mistress Tatiana Gsvsky, whose creations were sometimes as startling as they were novel. The extraordinary acting powers of the German dancers when coupled with intensely dramatic scenarios created a nightmarish mpression, rather akin to grand Gingnol productions; yet there was no gainsaying the lyrical charm of such dancers as Natscha Trormowa and Gert Reinholm, when seen in suitable roles.*

PERHAPS the most dramatic ballet I have ever seen had its Berlin premiere on July 1st, 1948, *the eve of my departure (to civil life). The work, first produced in Moscow in* 1940, *was* Romeo and Juliet *to Prokofieff's music, with Trofiniowa and Reinholm in the leading roles. New choreography, amazingly evocative of Shakespeare's tragedy, had been created by Tatiana Gsovsky. Owing to the Berlin 'blockade' having started the day before, I attended the performance in plain clothes and was greeted with significant smiles by several Russian officers whom I knew by sight. We were still friends—for the evening ! What a wonderful performance it was and, incidentally, is it not high time that this version of* Romeo and Juliet *was produced at Covent Garden ?*

In November, 1948, *I was in Milan endeavouring to pluck up enough courage to interview someone at the Scala, who might possibly be interested in seeing some ballet music I had written. Braving the stage-door keeper one afternoon, I elicited the information, readily given, that a ballet class was being held under the direction of the 'Maestro, Signor Massi', and that if I would wait, he would 'phone up and ask whether I might be admitted. After a few minutes I was led up flights of stairs and shown in to a practice room. I was greeted at the door by a smiling individual with enormous eyes, whose face I seemed to recognise vaguely, though I had never met him. He invited me to take a seat beside him. The ballet practice continued, and after a few minutes the 'maestro' inquired the reason of my visit. Having enlightened him, a desultory conversation ensued, then languished, during which time it very gradually and terrifyingly dawned on me that I had been taken unawares; that the stage-door keeper had either mis-pronounced the name or I had mis-heard it, and that the exotic individual with whom I was conversing was none other than the celebrated Massine himself, on whom a perfect stranger without any introduction had thrust himself. With an amused gleam in those terrible eyes of his he confirmed that he was indeed Massine, and then most charmingly told me to send him my music. I thanked him, excused myself, and fled. Some two months later I again met Mr. Massine. This time he was not so pleasant. And whenever I look now at the score I had sent him, I am not at all surprised. But it took me some time to get over this little affair, and I hope I am wiser now.*

About this time I saw two performances of Ballet by the Scala troupe—lavish productions on a grand scale. But the innate predilection that the Italians have for stage processions sometimes held up the action, and turned what had promised well into a mere pageant.

From 1950 *to* 1953 *I was living in Sicily, and saw very little Ballet. A good performance by some pupils of a well known Russian ballet-mistress teaching in Rome, which was held in the Greek theatre at Taormina comes to mind. Also occasional performances by Nives Poli at Taormina and Reggio.*

IN March last year we moved to Venice, where I was fortunate in seeing the American Ballet Theatre (Lucia Chase) and later, in September, the New York City Ballet. Technically, the performances by both troupes were excellent, but, with the exception of Maria Tallchief (and Alonso in Act 2 *of* Giselle) *I can recall few moments of real lyrical beauty. So much was inclined to be jerky, spasmodic, gymnastic. The effort to be doing something new at all costs was too forced. And it has to be confessed that productions such as* Caprichos *and* The Cage *proved most distasteful to the Venetians.*

And so at last to two weeks ago, and the arrival of our beloved Sadler's Wells. Performances were given of The Sleeping Princess *on 9th November, and* Swan Lake *on the* 10*th, the latter (with Margot Fonteyn incomparable in the leading roles) receiving a tremendous ovation of my own enthusiasm at seeing our dancers once again, the reader can judge. But I must not dilate on that. There are two points which I wish to bring up, important for our ballet companies when abroad :—*

In Venice (and for that matter elsewhere in Italy) it is the custom always to make the first performance the most important. It is the premiere, and at the Venice Opera House for every premiere bouquets of flowers are placed in each box as a gift from the Management. On this occasion the detailed posters came out very late, but it was taken for granted that Fonteyn would appear on the first night, and the house was completely sold out. Great was the disappointment, therefore, of many who thus failed to see Fonteyn at all; for the second house was sold out almost as soon as the first, and it was quite impossible to change tickets. In Venice the last night is merely regarded as a popular one.

The second point is the great desirability for a foreign audience to see a British company performing a purely British work; and indeed, by so doing, to bring into relief those attributes of sweetness, tenderness, and happiness in dancing, whereby our dancers proclaim their particular characteristics. They do this, of course, at all times, but a foreign audience naturally wishes to see something indigenous to the soil of dancers from another land, and it is therefore greatly to be hoped that next time a British work will be included in the programme.

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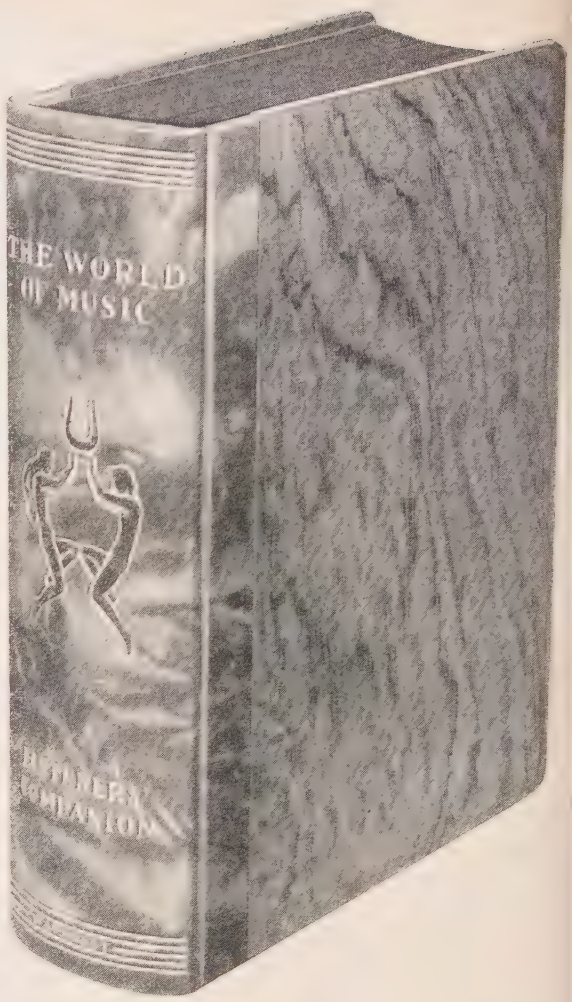

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–Part Six–
Sketches by JUDAH

Digest History of Ballet

THE two most outstanding artists of the Diaghilev era were Pavlowa and Nijinski. Pavlowa was trained in the St. Petersburg Academy and rose to become Prima Ballerina. She formed her own company after leaving Diaghilev in 1909, because she felt that she could best express herself through the dance unhampered by direction and large productions in which her personality and sense of dedication to the dance would be lost. Any lesser artist would not have survived the poor material in which she elected to appear in her tours throughout the world, which lasted for twenty years. Among her partners were Mikhail Mordkin and Laurent Novikov. She died in 1931.

The name of Pavlowa has become legendary and not the least of her claims to fame is the inspiration she became to countless aspiring dancers of the first quarter of the present century. Pavlowa was unique, and the very qualities which made her so are those which it would be disastrous for any lesser artist to imitate—her extreme individuality and her wholly justified unorthodox use of classicism.

The antithesis of Duncan, it was precisely by means of her superb training that her personality was able to express itself, and even when she broke her line or altered a movement the better to convey an image, she was only able to do so because her body was such a perfectly tuned instrument that it could at once link up with the classicism it had momentarily left. Her most famous dance was, of course, *Le Cygne*, by Fokine, and anyone who saw her in this knows that her artistry has not yet been surpassed. Other ballets and divertissements in her repertory included : *Autumn Bacchanal*, also by Fokine, *The Fairy Doll* and *Dance of the Hours*, by Clustine and *Autumn Leaves* and *Calfornian Poppy*, by herself.

NIJINSKI

Nijinski was probably the greatest male dancer the world has ever seen.

In addition to remarkable baloon and elevation, like Pavlowa he appears to have been possessed of a quality of complete absorption in the role he was portraying, so that he compelled belief in its reality, however fantastic it might be. The ultimate value of his attempts at choreography will probably never be decided. Were they the first groping efforts of a genius, years before his time, or the stumbling anti-social attempts of a split personality to assert itself ?

Another figure deserving separate mention is Enrico Cecchetti (1850-1928), dancer, mime and teacher. He taught at the St. Petersburg and Warsaw Academies, in London and at La Scala, Milan, and was responsible for the daily training of the Diaghilev Company for the greater part of its existence. Many of the famous dancers seen in Europe since 1900 at one time or another passed through his hands.

SUEDOIS

During the later part of the Diaghilev period another company challenged comparison with the "Ballet Russe". This was the "Ballet Suédois", a private company formed by Rolf de Maré, a wealthy Swede, to present ballets with contemporary themes

Although he had the assistance of Jean Borlin as choreographer, dancer and maitre-de-ballet, he was handicapped by the comparatively low standard of Swedish dancers at that time. However, he took full advantage of the expressionistic experiments being made in the European theatre and a number of striking and original ballets were composed and presented including : *L'Homme et son Desir, El Greco* and *La Creation du Monde.*

The company survived for four years, from 1920-25, playing in most of the European capitals.

MONTE CARLO

AFTER the death of Diaghilev the artists of his company were scattered like sheep without a shepherd and an attempt was made to collect them together and to re-form the company as near as possible to the original.

Thus the "Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo", founded by René Blum and Colonel de Basil, came into existence in 1932. The company was strengthened by recruits from the Paris studios opened by ex-dancers from the Russian Imperial Schools, denied return to their own country after the revolution. Among these young dancers were the "baby" ballerinas Tamara Toumanova, Irina Baronova and Tatania Riabouchinska. Later the company split into "Les Ballet Russes du Colonel de Basil" and "Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo".

Massine, Balanchine and David Lichine were connected with these companies for part of their existence and it was during this period that Massine created his symphonic ballets :—*Les Presages* (Tchaikovsky) and *Choreartium* (Brahms) in 1933 and *Symphonie Fantastique* (Berlioz) in 1936. These symphonic ballets a sensation at the time, may now be judged as experiments that failed, for instead of opening up new possibilities for the reconstruction of musical form in dance form, they have only shown the limitations of this type of choreography and have led to a host of dreary imitations. *Symphonie Fantastique* was probably the most successful of the three owing to the dramatic, pictorial nature of the score.

TO AMERICA

At the outbreak of war in 1939, when the London theatres were closed, the ballet scene shifted to the United States to which many dancers emigrated. The Paris Opera, however, which had been comparatively uncreative for the first quarter of the century, received new stimulus in 1930 by the appointment of Lifar as premier dancer and maitre-de-ballet, a post he held until 1944 and again from 1948.

His best known ballets, in the neo-classical vein, were: *Icare* (1935), *David Triomphant* (1937) and *Suiten-Blanc* (1943). In recent years France has produced at least one prima ballerina—Yvette Chauviré.

In 1945, a new company, under the artistic direction of Boris Kochno, made its appearance, with Roland Petit as chief choreographer. A number of stimulating and artistically successful ballets were created, notably: *Les Forains* by Petit, with music by Sauguet, *Jeu de Cartes* by Charrat, with music by Strawinski and *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* by Petit and Cocteau, to music by Bach. These ballets were the means by which a remarkable individual artist Jean Babilée, was introduced to the London public.

After the war a number of companies attempting to re-establish international ballet sprang up in Europe, but it seemed as though the fashion for ballet on the grand scale which had come into Western Europe from Russia had run its course, and the immediate future lay with national ballet.

DENMARK

The international scene is not complete without a mention of the Royal Danish Ballet, with an unbroken tradition of 200 years. The ballet rose to considerable heights in the early days of the last century under Galeotti, but it was August Bournonville who, during the middle of the same century, created the Danish ballet which we know to-day, with its pure French style and the virility of its male dancing. After his death the glory of the ballet faded for a time but was revived again under Harald Lander as recently as some thirty years ago. The best known Bournonville ballets in the repertory are: *La Sylphide* (Bournonville version), *Napoli* and *El Folkesagn.*

diary

Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

Feb. 28: *Lac* (*Fonteyn/Somes*)
Mar. 1: *Purcell, Ballabile, Rinaldo, Facade*
2: *do.*
3: *Lac* (*Grey/Field*)
4: *Ballabile, Giselle* (*Fonteyn*)
5: mat—*Purcell, Lac* (*Act* 2), *Boutique*; eve—*Giselle* (*Elvin*) *Facade*
7: *Coppelia* (*Lindsay/Doyle*)
8: *Coppelia* (*Nerina/Blair*)
9: *Purcell, Giselle* (*Clayden*)
10: *Shadow, Checkmate, Boutique*
11: *Lac* (*Elvin*)
12: mat—*Lac* (*Beriosova*); eve—*Patineurs, Checkmate, Boutique*
14: *Lac* (*Nerina/Rassine*)
15: *Ballabile, Rinaldo, Boutique*
16: *Shadow, Firebird, Boutique*
17: *Shadow, Firebird, Boutique*
18: *Patineurs, Rinaldo, Checkmate*
19: *Coppelia* (*Heaton/Blair*); eve—*Purcell, Shadow, Symphonic Variations, Facade*
21: *Purcell, Ballabile, Symphonic Variations, Facade*
22: *Gala Performance in aid of the Wells Benevolent Fund and the School*
23: *Sylphides, Shadow, Job*
24: *Patineurs, Rinaldo, Daphnis*
25: *Boutique, Rinaldo, Job*
26: mat—*Lac* (*Nerina*); eve—*Sylphides, Daphnis, Patineurs*
29: *Madame Chrysantheme* (*Premiere of the third new ballet by Frederick Ashton this season—to Rawsthorne music and with decor and costumes by Isabel Lambert*)

The Story of Inna

INNA hesitated before the director's office. She looked very small, almost a mere child, and excitement and embarrassment were plainly written on her face. At last she summoned her courage and knocked on the door . . . .

That was in the grim autumn of 1941, in Molotov, whither the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre had been evacuated from Leningrad.

In the spring of 1941, Inna Zubkovskaya graduated from the ballet school in Moscow. The girl moved to Molotov with her family. She applied to the director for permission to come for practical training in the classical dance, so as not to lose her skill.

by
Ballerina
G. Kremshevskaya

TEMPERAMENT

A month later Inna Zubkovskaya was on the stage of the theatre in Molotov. And when the Kirov Theatre returned to Leningrad, it brought the young dancer along with it.

Zubkovskaya's repertory was largely determined by her appearance. Tall, slender and graceful, with deep-set black eyes, she seemed predestined by nature for roles requiring a combination of beautiful forms and great temperament.

A certain lack of warmth which was felt in Zubkovskaya's early performances had vanished with the acquisition of experience on the professional stage, with her growing ability for deep penetration of the character. Her recent performance of the part of Zemfira, the Gypsy Girl, in the film *Aleko*, based on Rachmaninov's opera, was distinguished by real fiery temperament.

Lyrical emotions are also close to Zubkovskaya's talent. The pensive smile playing on the face of the actress fits in with the character of her lyrical heroines. Her first success in characters of this type was as Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake*. The slow, even rhythm of her movements, expressive plasticity of her arms, serious and deep emotions combined with lyrical warmth, create the poetic picture of a beautiful, regal swan.

CONVINCING

The lyrical talent of the young actress stood out most convincingly in her performance of Syumbike in *Shurale*, by the young Tartar composer Yarullin. With a harried flutter of the arms, her flexible body expressing anxiety and winglike movements, she created the impression of a fantastic swan-girl. In her sincere trust in Ali-Batyr (hero of the beautiful Tartar fairy tale which lies at the basis of this ballet) who saves her from the ghost of the forests, Shurale, in the awakening feelings of her first love one feels the joy of life which is expressed through the quick tempo of the dance.

We recognise the proud modesty of Syumbike in the Armenian girl Gayane (in Khachaturyan's ballet of the same name produced by the ballet master Anisimova). Zubkovskaya has created a feminine and very rich character of the Soviet girl.

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READERS LETTER

WITH reference to your timely article 'Unemployment in Ballet' I should just like to add that many provincial Pantomimes i.e. Belfast, Bristol, Cardiff, Chester, Cheltenham etc. are paying the dancers £6 a week, with 2-3 weeks rehearsal at £3 a week, (and in Belfast, hardly any digs under £4.) This after years of training and study, (and in my case I recently have been studying Indian, Hungarian, Modern dance etc. to broaden my style.) Recently also, a male dancer friend of mine lived on bread only (until he collapsed) in order to take two lessons daily.

Just what is Equity doing to help trained dancers compete with the hordes of people who are willing to work for these starvation wages over the Winter season ?

Masses of half trained dancers are engaged for dreary routines that could be arranged better by mentally deficients and yet one woman and three slick dancers can fill a London theatre.

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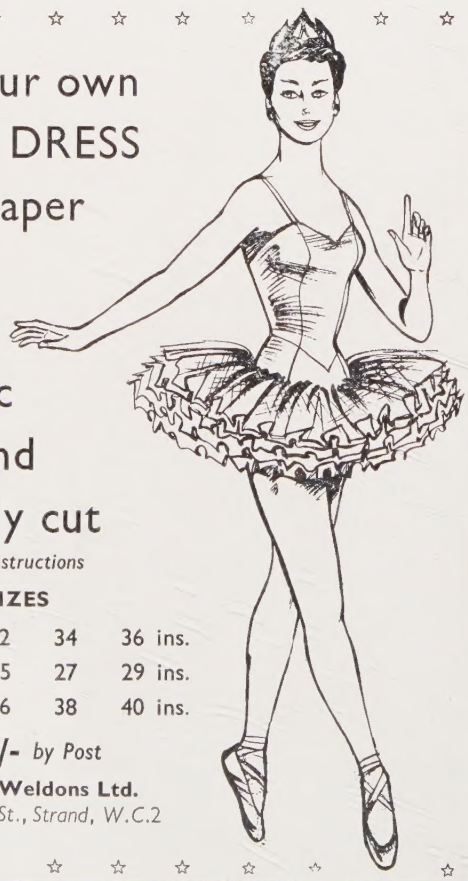

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BALLET TODAY is published from 15 Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, by I. E. Herf Tel. : ELMBRIDGE 9743 & 2607 Printed by Richard Madley Ltd., 54 Grafton Way, W.1, England. Subscription rate: 15/- one year. U.S.A. $2.50. SOLE AGENTS : Australasia—Gordon & Gotch, Ltd. South Africa—Central News Agency Ltd, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland—Kingstons Ltd. Sole Agents for Italy : Intercontinentaal Via Edolo, 27, Milano. German subscriptions to : Presse-Vertriebs Gesellschaft M.B.H., Frankfurt a-Main, Mainzer Landstr. 225/227. Sole agents for India : Patrika Syndicate Ltd.